

A.A.GROMYKO
INTERVIEWED
BY SOVIET
POLITICAL
ANALYSTS

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On January 13 Andrei Gromyko, member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, was interviewed by a group of political analysts—Yuri Zhukov (*Pravda*), Vikenty Matveyev (*Izvestia*), Vladimir Bogachyov (TASS) and Valentin Zorin (Central Television and Radio). The interview was televised.

Andrei Gromyko: I would like to begin by welcoming you. You must have quite a few questions. So, please feel free to ask them. I will try to answer them.

Question: Your meeting with Secretary of State Shultz in Geneva has evoked a great deal of interest both in our country and all over the world. What is your overall evaluation of the results of that meeting?

Answer: On the whole, our evaluation of the results of that meeting is positive. The joint Soviet-US statement speaks for itself. We agreed on the subject matter of the forthcoming talks and on the goals which should be achieved as a result of these talks. This, of course, is very important.

Question: You said that the questions of nuclear and space weapons would be discussed at the forthcoming talks as a complex, that is, as

being interrelated. This is an entirely new approach. What has prompted it?

Answer: It was prompted by the assumption that if one is striving to put an end to the arms race and to remove the threat of war, in a word, if one is striving for lasting peace, it is necessary to ensure that an arms race does not start in space and the one on earth is stopped. That was the main task that faced the participants in the Geneva meeting.

The US Administration pressed very hard in a bid to prevent discussion on questions relating to outer space and to leave outer space open for the arms race. This position is absolutely unacceptable. We have pointed this out on more than one occasion, on the eve of the Geneva meeting as well. It was not easy to reach agreement on the terms of that meeting. It was finally agreed, however, that that question could and should be discussed. As you know, outer space also figures in the joint statement, which means that the view has prevailed that neither the question of strategic weapons nor of medium-range nuclear weapons can be examined without examining the question of space, or to be more precise, without the question of preventing an arms race in space.

The US side eventually agreed to accept this point of view. This is a positive fact. I would like to add that after I had returned from Geneva and, accordingly, after Secretary of State Shultz had returned to Washington, he sent me a letter to say that the US government intended to abide by the accords reached in Geneva and that it regarded seriously the commitments assumed under those agreements. This is a positive sign. But, as the saying goes, time will tell.

Question: All the indications are that questions of space weapons will be of key importance for progress at the talks. What is the essential dif-

ference between the Soviet and the US approach to them?

Answer: The essential difference lies in the fact—this at any rate was expressed most clearly before the Geneva meeting—that the USA wished to leave the matter of space aside and to discuss only those types of armaments on which talks had already been held: on strategic arms and medium-range nuclear arms in Europe. That is what it comes down to.

The Soviet Union categorically objected to such a position. It believed and continues to believe that it is impossible to leave the question of space aside. After all, it is possible theoretically to visualise a situation when success has been achieved in the questions of strategic and medium-range nuclear arms while an arms race goes on in outer space and it is being increasingly stuffed with the corresponding weaponry. This would not only reduce to naught what has been accomplished on the Earth but would make matters even worse. As a result, the balance would be harmful for peace, the situation would be complicated and still more dangerous. We made this quite plain to the government of the United States, its allies and the entire world. We spoke about this also in Geneva, and we spoke firmly and—I may say—sharply.

We wanted to bring this home to the US Administration and to those who supported and continue to support its position on the space issue. The conclusion we came to and which we also repeated in Geneva, is that it is impossible to examine productively questions of strategic nuclear arms and medium-range nuclear weapons without considering questions relating to space, to outer space.

Question: What is actually meant when the Soviet Union resolutely comes out in favour of the prevention of the militarisation of outer space?

Answer: We mean that weapons intended for use against objects in space should be categorically banned, just as weapons designed for use from outer space against the Earth as a planet. In other words, against objects on the ground, on the sea, in the atmosphere. We have always emphasised this position.

Question: Those who had an opportunity of having a close view of the progress of the talks in Geneva have got the impression that they were not easy. Is that so?

Answer: Yes, you could say that. The talks were far from easy and were sometimes very complicated, if not tense in the political sense of the word. Of course, we did not bang our fists on the table or even throw our spectacles on the table, but that is what they were.

On the whole, however—and I should like to emphasise this—they were businesslike, serious and frank. I repeat, frank, in the sense in which this term is used when speaking of talks during which the parties involved do not hesitate to say what they think, and to say it quite clearly, sometimes with no regard for politesse.

Question: Andrei Andreyevich, in this connection here is a question about the United States' large-scale anti-missile defence programme. In Washington they usually say that by this they mean only research work which, they claim, does not contradict the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, and not the testing and deployment of such weapons. How should such a position be approached?

Answer: I must say that for a long time US proponents of the plan for the so-called large-scale anti-missile defence glossed over individual components, individual phases of that problem, and did not differentiate between them. Later on they realized that, naturally, that position was weak;

facing criticism, and, I would say, exposure of the nature of that position, they corrected it somewhat and came to the conclusion that the deployment of relevant objects and their testing could be prohibited. They stated this clearly for the first time in Geneva.

As for research, they claim that it should be conducted. Their justification for this was that research could not be prohibited anyway since such a ban could not be verified. The problem of verification is of course a difficult one. If research is confined to paper work in offices, verification will obviously not be easy. But there often is some testing ground located next to a laboratory and it is used for relevant purposes.

Even if we assume that verification is difficult, why should work be conducted, even if it is called research, when there is agreement that the ultimate objective should be the complete and final elimination of nuclear weapons?

Why should research be conducted for the development of an entire system of new types of weaponry for deployment in space? Thus the position of the US Administration as regards research is vulnerable. Why should it be necessary to make preparation, even at the initial stage, for the subsequent testing and deployment of new types of armaments? And who can guarantee that it will stop there after research has been completed? Will there not be people, scientists and others, who will say: we have spent so many billion dollars on research, why waste all this money? Isn't it better to use it and go on to the next phase, that is, testing and deployment? Can this happen? It certainly can. We know the ways of the US Administration and we know the situation in the United States. That is why the policy of conducting research with a view to developing a large-scale anti-ballistic missile system is wholly untenable,

both morally and politically, and I want to stress this most strongly. This policy is vulnerable and must be rejected.

To be frank, the distance between this position and absurdity is a very short one.

Question: The US side often claims that the Soviet Union underestimates the problem of verification, and it is sometimes even said that the Soviet Union does not respect the commitments it has assumed. What can you say on this score?

Answer: Indeed, the US side has long been resorting to this argument, one may say, ever since questions of disarmament began to be discussed after World War II. My answer to this question is that no state has advanced a more radical or more far-reaching proposal on verification than the Soviet Union.

After nuclear weapons had been developed, when the question of verification came up, we made a proposal at the United Nations to ban those weapons for good. We were asked: what about verification, what about other types of weapons? Our answer was simple: let us raise the question of other types of weapons also and let us agree on verification. What sort of verification? The widest and all-embracing verification, the most extensive verification possible, in short, universal verification. We and no other state made that proposal. Our friends fully supported it. It was our joint proposal. And for many years we insisted on the adoption of the proposal on universal disarmament under universal control.

You would think the West, the United States of America agreed to it? No, it did not. It has not agreed either to universal disarmament and prohibition of nuclear weapons or to universal verification. This proposal is still on the table of the US Administration, the other NATO governments and the governments of the world generally.

Today too we are prepared to consider such a broad proposal, the proposal for universal and complete disarmament under universal and complete international control. I stress, international, which means that US representatives can also take part in this control.

As for insinuations that the Soviet Union does not abide by some commitments under the agreements which it has concluded, they are sheer inventions. Turn your mind to the fact that those memorandums and notes which are sent by the US Administration to Congress and sometimes brought to the notice of the United Nations with allegations of this kind contain expressions like these: there are doubts that the Soviet Union is abiding by such and such commitments; or the Soviet Union appears to be failing to respect fully such and such commitments; or there is a need to check if the Soviet Union is honouring such and such commitments.

But there are never any direct statements with factual proof that the Soviet Union is really violating anything. We categorically reject this. No, the Soviet Union is not in the habit of violating its commitments under treaties and agreements which it and other states have signed, be it a bilateral or a multilateral agreement. We take pride in this fact.

Incidentally, the world is accustomed to this. When the Americans say that the Soviet Union's respect for the provisions of one agreement or another is doubtful, they are listened to rather indifferently, you know, and no other state has ever made any statements to us maintaining that such claims correspond to reality. No, never. Our conscience is clear. We do not make agreements to break them, we fulfil them from beginning to end.

Question: US officials are hinting that they intend to conduct serious talks only on nuclear arms, but as for space weapons, the US side,

supposedly, intends merely to "clarify the importance of those systems for strengthening peace". How are these statements to be evaluated?

Answer: If there are such arbitrary interpretations of the US position in connection with the agreement reached in Geneva, they do not reflect the spirit of that agreement, if it is understood in the way any reasonable person should understand it. It was clearly stated there that what is in question is talks embracing the following areas: space, strategic nuclear arms and medium-range nuclear weapons.

If anyone has in mind a situation when in discussing the issue of outer space, one side would merely engage in elucidating its own position which is not in the spirit of the agreement, and the other side would only listen, they are on the wrong track, we do not have in mind such a seminar. This would be a useless, futile exercise.

Without reaching an accord, simultaneous and interrelated in all three directions, there can be no advance in the realisation of what was agreed upon in Geneva. One would like fewer arbitrary statements of this kind to come from the United States of America. It would be best of all if there were no more statements of this kind. There is a need for a serious approach to these matters. They do not tolerate such arbitrary treatment.

Question: What prospects would there be with regard to a reduction in strategic arms should an accord be reached on preventing the militarisation of outer space?

Answer: I can say that the prospects would be more favourable than they have been so far. As I have already said, the banning of strategic arms cannot be considered separately from issues relating to outer space. But if the problems of outer space were examined in the proper way and if understanding were to be reached in this respect, it

would be possible to make headway also in the matter of strategic arms.

The Soviet Union is ready not only to consider the problem of strategic arms, but would also be prepared for their sharp reduction, adhering, of course, to the principle of equality and equal security. On the other hand, if there is no advancement on the issues relating to outer space, it would be pointless to discuss the possibility of reducing strategic arms.

Question: Are the earlier agreements on strategic armaments still valid?

Answer: As regards the SALT-1 agreement, which was concluded when Richard Nixon was the US President, the sides concurred, although the term of the agreement had expired, to exchange official statements to the effect that the commitments they had assumed under the agreement remained in force. Hence they continue to remain in force today. We are prepared to take the same view of this agreement in the future as well.

As to the SALT-2 treaty, which was signed in Vienna by Leonid Brezhnev for our side, and by President Carter for the US side, it is common knowledge that that agreement has not been ratified by the United States. That is why the commitments assumed by the sides under that agreement are not legally valid. But the sides proceed from the premise that what is of positive importance in that agreement should be actually in force. The situation with regard to this agreement is not simple in many respects. Some provisions of the agreement, and this should be clear, for instance, on cruise missiles, are invalid. The time factor is responsible in this case. These provisions, in particular, the protocol to the treaty, are no longer valid. On the whole, it will be correct to say that whatever is positive in this treaty should remain in force. Both sides understand this, and this is good.

Question: The US Administration emphasises that the USSR's possession of heavy intercontinental ballistic missiles has a destabilising effect, and insists on a sharp reduction of these systems. Is there any justification for posing the issue in this way?

Answer: No, there is absolutely no justification for raising the question in this way. When talks on strategic arms were held in the past, our so-called heavy missiles, which Washington especially objects to now, were an integral part of the agreement. I repeat, an integral part of the agreement.

We softened our stance on the issue of US forward-based nuclear systems, including those in Europe—we did not insist on the inclusion in that treaty of the US bases in Europe, although we did state that the matter should find solution at subsequent negotiations. In exchange, the United States agreed that the Soviet Union could have the heavy missiles, which are now the subject of so much talk and even rumpus in the United States.

On this score, too, the Soviet Union has favoured and continues to favour the principle of equality and equal security. We drew to that the attention of the US Administration, in which there are, of course, rational people. The Administration itself realizes that the strategic armaments in the USSR and the United States have different histories, that they took shape in different ways. The United States has always possessed a powerful fleet of bombers, primarily, nuclear-capable aircraft. Another factor, submarines, was also in its favour. To talk about eliminating the difference, at one go, including the difference in the structure of strategic nuclear forces, is not a serious approach. It seems that even official US circles are at long last beginning to understand that their demand, which they stressed earlier in relation to our heavy missiles, is excessive and inappropriate. It is said

increasingly often that it is indeed necessary to understand the history of the establishment of the strategic nuclear forces of both sides.

We did not and do not depart from the holy of holies in talks on nuclear armaments—the principle of equality and equal security. That was our position in the past, that is our position now, and that is what it will be in the future.

This is the only sound and convincing basis on which it is possible to seek agreement and positive solutions to the issues of nuclear strategic arms, issues relating to outer space and issues of medium-range nuclear weapons.

Question: What place, in your view, will be accorded in the planned talks to the solution of the problem of medium-range nuclear armaments? What will be the situation if the Americans continue to deploy their new nuclear missiles in Europe?

Answer: If the United States continues to deploy its medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe the situation, it should be frankly said, will become more complicated, much more complicated. Our proposal for freezing all nuclear arms is well known. Moreover, we warned the United States at Geneva quite definitely that if it acted in this way, if it continued to deploy medium-range nuclear missiles—and it stresses in every way that it has such plans and intends to implement them—then the United States would put in question the talks that are to be started in accordance with the agreement reached in Geneva. I repeat that we warned the United States about this. We hope that it will take this into consideration.

Question: Have Washington and its allies re-examined their attitude to the inclusion of the nuclear forces of Britain and France in the overall count in tackling the issue of medium-range nuclear arms?

Answer: According to what we heard from representatives of the United States of America in Geneva and outside Geneva—and you know that American statesmen make declarations almost every day, commenting on one or another aspect related to nuclear arms and, in general, to the situation and relations between East and West, between the United States and the Soviet Union—the United States has not altered its position with regard to the British and French nuclear missiles in question. Our reply to them was, is and will continue to be that the British and French nuclear missiles should be taken into account. Britain and France are members of the North Atlantic alliance. It would be totally unjustified to give the North Atlantic alliance a kind of allowance or bonus, so to say, in the form of the British and French nuclear missiles.

Herein lies the essential difference between us. It is the main difference in relation to the discussions on the problem of medium-range nuclear weapons. We have made proposals setting forth the basis on which agreement could be reached between the Soviet Union and the USA. We have stated on more than one occasion that we are not in any way demanding that Britain and France eliminate their nuclear missiles. We only say that they must be counted. This means that if the British and French nuclear systems are retained, then US nuclear systems must be cut back accordingly. They are one company, so to speak, who are on the same side of the barricade, as it were.

Question: Does the Soviet position envisage the inclusion of carrier-based aircraft in the total number of medium-range nuclear weapons in the European zone?

Answer: This is an exceptionally important question. In the talks which have taken place so far we have taken into account six US aircraft carriers

which either are in the seas and oceans around Europe, say, in the Mediterranean, or near them. I repeat, six aircraft carriers.

As everyone knows, the United States has 14 aircraft carriers altogether and a fifteenth is being built. There is every indication that it will be completed shortly. Every aircraft carrier has 40 nuclear-capable planes. Every plane carries two or three nuclear warheads. Work it out for yourselves: if we take just six aircraft carriers, that makes at least 480 nuclear warheads, and there is a total number of 15 aircraft carriers! And is it difficult to redeploy aircraft carriers from other parts of the world closer to Europe in some extreme situation? Not too difficult.

This is to say that at some particular stage of the talks we can raise the question of not just six but of 15 aircraft carriers, that is, of those which we have not yet counted. Even if we take just six aircraft carriers and count just two nuclear warheads per plane then, as I have already said, there will be 480 warheads, and if there are twice as many delivery planes, there will be twice as many nuclear warheads, namely, more than 1,000. That is a colossal destructive force. We intend to hold this question of aircraft carriers in reserve. If the progress of the talks is such that the use of this factor is justified, we will use it. That is our right. It is not a luxury but a necessity.

I have tried to provide a mathematical basis for this position. The Americans are aware of it although sometimes, evidently considering it the utmost in sophisticated tactics, they ostensibly overlook it, brush the question aside.

Question: It is sometimes said in the West that the talks broken off previously are now simply being resumed, and that this is because new US missiles are being deployed in Europe. What is your comment on such assertions?

Answer: Of course, this is not a continuation of the old talks but completely new talks. The Americans, and the Secretary of State personally, have also agreed that these are new talks and not a continuation of the old negotiations. An attempt was made in the beginning to use such an expression as "resumption of talks". But when we clarified the point and suggested getting closer to the truth, they agreed that the talks are, of course, absolutely new ones.

What should be stressed here above all? Previously we had conducted separately talks on strategic arms and on medium-range arms—and the two sides then agreed to try this method in the expectation that it might make it easier to arrive at agreements—whereas now it has become absolutely clear that it is impossible to hold talks and to try and reach an agreement on strategic arms without solving the question of medium-range weapons. Why is it impossible? Because for the Soviet Union medium-range weapons are also strategic weapons. Medium-range arms are medium only in range but as far as the Soviet Union is concerned, they are strategic in nature and in power. These weapons can reach the territory of the Soviet Union. And our medium-range weapons, the SS-20 missiles, the type of weapons against which the United States inveighs day and night, cannot reach the territory of the USA.

This is one of the arguments in favour of the view that now the solution of problems should be approached in their interrelationship. The question of nuclear strategic arms should not be regarded separately from the issue of space. Nor can it be regarded separately, as I have said, from medium-range weapons, not to mention the fact that strategic arms and medium-range arms, taken together, should not be considered separately from arms in space.

We went to the Geneva meeting in order to tell the truth: with the situation as it exists today, all these problems can only be considered in their entirety. If the US Administration had had no plans for establishing a so-called large-scale anti-ballistic missile system then the question of involving space issues and considering everything together would not have arisen. Space must be kept clear, the arms race must not be allowed to spread to this area. But the situation is different. Now the problems of strategic arms and medium-range weapons can only be considered together, alongside space issues.

The most important thing is to bear in mind that all this is one entire complex. Not because it is easier on paper to deal with the three problems in their interrelationship and more convenient to sum up some results, to search for some points where there are differences. No, it is life itself, the actual state of affairs which make it necessary to consider all of this in its entirety.

Ultimately, it is all the same to people as to what kills them—a bomb that comes from space or a warhead launched by a strategic or a medium-range missile. But it is possible to rule out all three eventualities, provided there is a correct approach and something else, apart from an approach, namely, the desire and will to find an agreement.

Question: How will the security interests of our allies, the fraternal socialist states, be taken into account at the forthcoming talks?

Answer: We have fully taken them into account. The Soviet Union talks to the Western countries and the USA on its own behalf and on behalf of its allies. We have a common principled policy. This lends strength to our policy. We discuss these questions periodically at the meetings of the Political Consultative Committee and other bodies of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation. This is a

joint policy. We act on our own and on their behalf and we believe that their security interests, as well as those of the Soviet Union, should be fully safeguarded.

Question: Suppose the USA, considering its conduct in the past, violated the agreement reached concerning the need for preventing an arms race in space. What consequences would such a situation have?

Answer: There would be the most serious consequences. If the USA acted in this way the talks would be torpedoed. We warned the US representatives of this. There is no choice and no middle ground here. Either to deal seriously with space, to prevent an arms race in space and to keep it non-militarised, or there will be an arms race. This question cannot be solved by half-measures. A half-measure may be a half-measure today but tomorrow it may lead to an intensification of the arms race. And then space would become a terrible arena for the deployment of the corresponding types of arms and would pose an enormous danger to the very existence of humanity.

This is far from being an exaggeration. When people talk about so-called "Star Wars", a large-scale anti-ballistic missile system, they are talking about a life-and-death issue. That is how the question stands. We consider it our duty to bring the truth home not only to the United States of America but also to the whole world. This was said more than once by Konstantin Chernenko in his statements and in his addresses to the President of the United States in which he called attention to the need to prevent a competition in the deployment of space weapons. We shall take a resolute stand on the question of outer space.

However strong may be the words used, they will be insufficient to express all of the danger that would be posed by the deployment of arms

in space and by the spread of the arms race to space.

Question: Which of the sides made the proposal on the structure of the forthcoming talks?

Answer: This proposal was made by us, the Soviet side, and this proposal is a logical one.

We reasoned—and this is by what the Central Committee and the Political Bureau were guided—that since there is a need for considering simultaneously the problems relating to space and the problems of strategic nuclear arms and medium-range nuclear weapons it is logical to have the structure of the talks accord with this. Therefore we suggested that each side should be represented by one delegation although it should, of course, include three groups, one to deal with the questions relating to space, another with strategic nuclear armaments, and the third with medium-range nuclear weapons.

We explained in detail the purpose of this structure. Each group should concern itself with its particular field, but questions will inevitably arise that will also interest another group, questions connected with those discussed in another group and in the third group.

In this case the delegation as a whole should review the situation, consider how different questions tally with one another so that a situation should not arise in which an accord would be formulated in one group regardless of what happens in the others. I have already mentioned the questions relating to space and the inadmissibility of excluding this subject while reaching an agreement on other questions. We have not stipulated any strict rules as to how often the delegation should meet in full to consider these questions. Today this is impossible to foresee. The progress of the talks will prompt appropriate procedures. Thus there should be an in-depth examination by in-

dividual groups of questions in their respective fields and of all the questions from the point of view of their interrelationships. The three fields mean a host of different components. There are advantages here, because the more components there are, the more opportunities for negotiation and for correlating them in different combinations. But there are also difficulties. All that should be taken into consideration. There is no other way.

But we should not let ourselves be frightened by this structural complexity. Given the desire and the will, solutions can be found because all this is verifiable. Moreover, it is possible without any particular difficulty mathematically to compute, fit together and balance everything. There is such a possibility. No few people have access to factual material. There will be no hindrance in this respect. What is needed is the will and desire.

Question: What can you say about the future of the talks as far as it can be judged today, even before they have begun?

Answer: This is a question to which an accurate answer is hard to give. I think that if we gather a hundred wise men, they would not be able to answer this question.

I can only speak for the Soviet side. We stand for businesslike talks, for a serious approach; our position is that the goals set in Geneva should be pursued in earnest, that the sides should not try to be sly, that each of them should not attempt to deceive the other and secure some advantages in violation of the principle of equality and equal security. Each of the sides should proceed from the assumption that the other side will not permit a disregard of this principle.

We stand for working towards peace, a mutually acceptable solution and the drafting of appropriate agreements. This holds true for the questions relat-

ing to space and strategic armaments. This also holds true for questions concerning medium-range nuclear weapons.

Question: Are there questions related to nuclear weapons which, though they will not be discussed at the forthcoming talks, can be solved independently already today?

Answer: Yes, there are such questions. We spoke about this to the American side and stated what these questions were. Without giving here a complete list of such questions, it can be said, for instance, that it is possible, regardless of the state of affairs in all the three fields, to conclude an agreement on ending nuclear weapon tests. Why cannot this question be solved? It can be solved. There are no objective obstacles to reaching an agreement on this question and to formalising such an agreement. We have proposed it and will continue to do so.

Another question is a freeze on nuclear arsenals. It is possible to single out this question. We stand for solving it as quickly as possible, regardless of the state of affairs in any of the three fields we are speaking about.

Here is a third example. We believe that the agreement on nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes and the agreement on the threshold on nuclear weapon tests signed by the Soviet Union and the United States a few years ago can be put into effect. There was downright obstruction on the part of the United States. It deliberately and demonstratively did not see this matter through. But this can be done. There are also other questions which, in our view, can be solved without making them conditional on agreements in those fields which I have spoken of. I would mention here the adoption by the nuclear powers of the commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. At any time—today, tomorrow, or the

day after tomorrow—every nuclear country can and, we believe, must assume such a commitment.

The Soviet Union has already assumed this commitment and, as you know, the whole world has welcomed it.

Question: The Soviet Union is entering new talks with the United States. But is there any guarantee that these talks will not be used by Washington as a cover for attempts to achieve military superiority and will not be deadlocked once again by it?

Answer: I'm not sure if anyone could guarantee that the position of the United States will always be an honest and constructive one. We indeed know what happened in the past. I have cited some examples. Agreements once reached are broken or declared null and void. That is why I would prefer not to deal with such notions as guarantees.

We know perfectly well that in the interests of peace, in the interests of the United States, the Soviet Union and the whole world, everything should be done to ensure that the correct path is taken, that agreements are honoured, that all the accords which are needed are reached and that questions which require a solution are solved.

This is what one can say with confidence.

I would like on my own initiative to touch upon another important question in the spirit of your questions. There should be a correct understanding of this question by our people, all those in other countries who take an interest in these problems, and by the broad public in other countries.

The American side describes its plan concerning space, the plan for the so-called large-scale anti-ballistic missile system, as a defensive one. We were often told in Geneva as well, especially at the start of our talks: "But why do you object to it if it is a defensive plan? We just want to develop

systems which will hit missiles targeted at the United States of America. This surely is defence."

Here we are faced with a rather cunning and, generally speaking, perfidious stratagem. Just imagine that such a system, or a system similar to the one the United States of America, or more precisely, the US Administration, has in mind is developed. In other words, a shield is developed to ward off missiles. After all, they say that they fear a Soviet nuclear strike and that is why they need a shield.

Let us assume that they have developed such a shield. They say that this shield is peaceable and is intended to destroy missiles so that they should not reach their targets. As for the fact that missiles might be hurled from behind that shield at the other side, at the Soviet Union—naturally, in case of an extreme situation—it does not mean anything for, they say, there is supposedly no danger in this. And they even try to reassure us to this effect.

We are told: the United States has no intention to deliver a strike at the Soviet Union—I stress, intention. We say in reply: so is the Soviet Union to rely on your conscience? On Washington's conscience?

First, we are not particularly convinced that Washington has it in good measure. We don't have such a conviction because of certain facts. Second, we said to them: supposing we mentally change places with you, the United States of America, then you would reason like the Soviet Union. In other words, if we tried to develop such a system, would you rely on our corresponding statements, on our conscience? Would such statements be sufficient for you?

There was only silence in reply. The fact that this plan or system—they like the word "system" better—has been called "defensive" by the US Administration does not change anything. Some

sections of the public have been misled—this must be frankly admitted. But, of course, there is absolutely nothing at all defensive about the plan.

These are offensive weapons and the whole plan, frankly speaking, is a plan of aggression. I emphasise, of aggression. We are most emphatically against it. We think that anyone trying to take an honest stand on these questions should be aware of the goal pursued by this plan.

Let us suppose, for purposes of theoretical analysis, that the United States has developed this system but does not use its capabilities to launch missiles against the Soviet Union or to deliver a nuclear strike. But it ~~would~~ have the possibility to do so once it had such a shield. Would not it be used for exerting pressure, for blackmail?

This fits in with the policy of the US Administration aimed at securing a dominating position in the world, one that would enable the United States to dictate its terms. In this case it refers to the Soviet Union. We resolutely reject this system, this entire plan. I want to stress once again that equality is the firm basis for doing business in the future. Equality and equal security. There is no other basis.

If indeed there are people in the United States who believe that their country will achieve a dominating position in one way or another, whether by carrying through its plan to develop the above-mentioned system or without carrying it through, and that the Soviet Union will find itself in a subordinate position, they are mistaken. That is a gross mistake. This will never happen. I would like to use this occasion to stress once again what Konstantin Chernenko pointed out in his statements and what he personally wrote to President Reagan: such a situation is ruled out. We will never let it happen.

We have tremendous material and intellectual

resources, which are sufficient to ensure our security. This holds true both for the Soviet Union and for our allies and friends. Our people had found enough strength to emerge victorious from the unprecedentedly devastating war against German fascism. The world was amazed by this. The Soviet Union bore the brunt of the war. Figuratively speaking, our people were emitting nuclear energy, in the political sense. And they were the victors. They will never allow any country or group of countries to dictate their terms to them out of ideological considerations. That the American plans are to a large extent pervaded with ideological considerations is beyond doubt, and, I believe, this is clear to everyone in the Soviet Union and not only in the Soviet Union.

Question: I would like to bring up another issue. The Soviet and world public is worried by continued tension in the Caribbean. Would you comment on that?

Answer: We have had an opportunity to convey the point of view of the Soviet leadership on this question to the US Administration. We resolutely condemn its actions. The United States' policy is one of gross and naked interference in the internal affairs of countries in the Caribbean. This concerns above all Nicaragua. The United States has no right to dictate to that small country and its people what social system they should choose and in what conditions they should live. This is the sovereign right of the people of Nicaragua and of them alone. Recently general elections were held in that country and the top leaders of the state were elected. This is fresh proof of the amount of enmity and hatred that had been accumulated among the Nicaraguan people against the lackeys of the United States who in the past ruled that country. There are none of them in the country today. The people can breathe freely. What do they

need now? They need to be left alone. An end must be put to interference, to the blatant terrorism which is being practised against that country by the United States and its different services.

And, of course, we condemn the policy which the United States has been pursuing for a long time now towards Cuba. This refers to the economic blockade and various other unfriendly and even hostile acts. The Cubans and the Cubans alone have the right to decide what conditions of life should be like in their country, what system it should have, and no one has the right to interfere.

On the whole, if we take that region, indeed if we look beyond that region we see that it is time, high time that an end be put to US interference in the internal affairs of other states in every respect—political and economic interference by intelligence services and various special agencies which, it seems, do not stop for a single day their criminal activities against a number of states.

There is another question I would put to myself, as it were. How should the present-day world situation as a whole be evaluated? Where are we heading? Are we heading for peace or war?

Let me say this in advance: do not expect a mathematically precise answer. But something can be said nevertheless. The situation today is a very complicated one. Sometimes it is a dangerous one. There can be unforeseen developments. One has to be on one's guard. Our people are always on their guard.

But what should be stressed here? It should be stressed that our country, our entire people, the Leninist Communist Party, our leadership and the Political Bureau—Konstantin Chernenko has pointed this out publicly on more than one occasion—are resolved to do everything possible to safeguard peace. We are working for this goal and mobilising our people and our resources for achieving this

goal. We say this to our friends, and they share our position. We also say this to other countries. What is needed in order that we can work even more successfully to remove the threat of war and strengthen peace? It is necessary for all states, big and small, to work still more energetically for the same goal, for removing the threat of war and strengthening peace.

No state, even if it is a small one, should stand aside. No state should reason like this: there are big powers possessing immense resources, let them wage the struggle, the matter depends primarily on them. This is both correct and incorrect. It is true that the matter depends primarily on big powers. But it is wrong that they alone should wage the struggle for peace. All states, big and small, even the tiniest ones, should wage a struggle for peace.

A state may be small, but this does not mean that it cannot speak a great truth and speak out loudly in favour of peace and in condemnation of war; this is all the more so if the small states also start working in one direction and act in unison.

The same applies to public circles, to parties, above all to those which are opposed to war and which favour peace. And if we are talking about capitalist countries, this applies to workers in the fields of science and culture and representatives of the business community. They, too, should realize what war means and what consequences it would have. This applies to workers, peasants and intellectuals, no matter in what country they might live. We are convinced that the forces that stand for peace are more powerful than the forces that stand for war and the arms race.

Question: At the recent session of the UN General Assembly all nations voted for a resolution on the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. The United States alone abstained. The session adopted several other important decisions

in favour of curbing the arms race and reducing the war danger. How would you assess the results of the session on the whole?

Answer: We regard the results of the session as very positive. We submitted several proposals to the session for consideration, including a proposal on the inadmissibility of the militarisation of outer space. We derived immense satisfaction from the fact that an overwhelming majority of states backed our proposal. Indeed, only the United States was against it and demonstrated this by the way it voted. So, our assessment of the session's results is a very positive one.

In general, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to say that for a number of years a majority of states, even those which do not have very cordial state relations with us, have, one might say, instinctively, I repeat, instinctively, tended to support the proposals that promote the cause of preventing war and strengthening peace. This is a very good development. It is not to the liking of some countries which pursue an opposite policy.

What can we say about that? I would like to express the hope that these countries will take into consideration the opinion, the position of the overwhelming majority of states and of all the peoples of the world. There are grounds to say that the American people do not want a war either.

Question: In this connection, Andrei Andreyevich, how would you assess the role of the mass anti-war movements in the struggle for averting the arms race?

Answer: The role of these mass movements is very important. Of late one can hear time and again remarks to the effect that we in the Soviet Union had allegedly relied on the mass anti-war movements but that they had failed to prevent the deployment of American missiles in Western Europe and to stop these or other actions.

Such arguments are rather strange. The anti-war movement, though it does not embrace all the peoples, represents a progressive tendency. It has demonstrated that people hold in contempt those who work for war and who vote for military appropriations, hold in contempt and condemn those who press for a buildup of missile and nuclear weapon arsenals, condemn and hold in contempt those who vote in legislative bodies for a further militarisation of politics and for the arms race.

It may be assumed that the anti-war movement has far from exhausted its potential. We believe that it has not yet had its say. This is good. Public opinion and the mass of the people are realizing more and more clearly that the world is living through a crucial moment, that a grave danger, a grave threat hangs over the whole of mankind and that everything possible should be done to remove that threat, so that the Armageddon with which people have been intimidated for centuries should not happen.

Question: During the past years the USSR and the USA have concluded quite a number of agreements on cooperation in different spheres of bilateral relations. How do things stand at present?

Answer: I will answer briefly: the situation is unsatisfactory. A number of agreements—altogether, one might say, about a dozen—were concluded. Our delegations visited the United States and American delegations visited the Soviet Union under those agreements, and accords were reached on some questions; all that was done for the benefit of both sides.

But then those agreements were either formally cancelled or actually ceased to work because the US Administration, during the past few years, decided that those agreements should not remain in force, that they should be rendered null and void.

We had asked people in Washington: do you intend to leave these agreements frozen or do you have some other intentions? In our view, the present situation is harmful for you and us alike, and would it not be better that those agreements should work?

After some deliberation the answers came: indeed, some of the agreements should perhaps be revived so that they should work, while some other agreements still deserve a closer look. They said so once, then again, and, let me add, for a third time, but there has been no real movement yet. The agreements are so far paralysed, with very few exceptions.

Question: It has been announced that the forthcoming talks, like the efforts to limit and reduce armaments in general, should eventually lead to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons everywhere. What importance does the Soviet Union attach to the accomplishment of this task?

Answer: Exceptional importance. I must say that one of the main goals of the talks, as both powers have stated, is the complete exclusion of nuclear weapons from weapons' arsenals. It is a very significant accord and it was included in the joint statement. Nothing was said about this in earlier joint Soviet-US statements. We are very much of the opinion that practical deeds to resolve questions relating to space should not contravene this goal. It is a great and noble goal. The Soviet Union is setting it forth not just today: we set this goal forth immediately after atomic weapons had first come into being. In 1946 we tabled an appropriate proposal at the United Nations but at that time it failed to evoke any support, particularly on the part of the United States.

It is necessary that every step taken by the two powers, not only the Soviet Union but also the

United States, in matters concerning armaments and disarmament, bring the achievement of that goal—the exclusion, complete exclusion of nuclear weapons from weapons' arsenals—nearer and nearer.

Question: To what extent could the conclusion of mutually acceptable accords at the forthcoming talks contribute to an improvement of Soviet-American relations in general, as well as an overall improvement of the international situation?

Answer: Undoubtedly, this would contribute a great deal to an improvement in bilateral Soviet-American relations. This follows from the fact that the basic difference between the policy of the Soviet Union and the policy of the United States lies in matters related to the problem of nuclear weapons, in the question of the principle of equality and equal security, in the question of nonproliferation of the arms race and of stopping this race.

It is clear, therefore, that an accord on these problems would, undoubtedly, signify a major advance in the matter of improving Soviet-American relations, particularly if one takes into account the fact that both sides are big powers with extensive international interests.

**БЕСЕДА А. А. ГРОМЫКО
С СОВЕТСКИМИ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИМИ ОБОЗРЕВАТЕЛЯМИ**

на английском языке

Цена 10 коп.

